

This is the statement of SN Thomas A. Rehfeldt
Night time communications watchstander on 19 September 2005

The incident all really started hours before the wreck. The Sydney Mae II contacted station via his personal Cell phone. The captain of the Sydney Mae II asked about our bar conditions and tide changes, I informed the captain of the next tide change and bar conditions, including the restrictions for all recreational and uninspected vessels. He understood the restrictions and said he would stay outside the bar. At 1947 hours the last light bar report was passed as 14-16 ft. breaking swells in all areas. Restrictions were set at all recreational and uninspected vessels.

Immediately after the bar report was passed the captain of the Sydney Mae II called the station from his cell phone, I then passed the bar report and restrictions to him, our senior duty officer Chief Halstead also recommended he head down to Coos Bay. He said that he was in contact with someone who was telling him the bar was flat and passable. I assured him that the bar was not flat and we were still restricted to all recreational and uninspected vessels.

At approximately 1930 hours SN Vance temporarily relieved me of the communications watch, when I returned SN Vance was on the phone passing bar conditions and restrictions to the captain of the Sydney Mae II.

At 1945 hours the charter vessel Rivers End contacted the station on channel 22A VHF-FM, stating that he had been watching the bar for four to five hours and it was flat and wanted to know if the charter vessel Sydney Mae II was still outside the bar. I stated to the charter vessel Rivers End that I had spoken with the captain of the Sydney Mae II via land line, and informed him of Chief Halstead's recommendation that he head to Coos Bay. The vessel Rivers End then began arguing about the bar conditions, I stated that the bar report had been updated only fifteen minutes ago and it was breaking all the way across, he refused to believe what I was telling him. I promptly informed Chief Halstead of the situation and was told to direct any complaints to him.

The vessel Rivers End proceeded to contact the Sydney Mae II on the radio, stating that he thought the bar was flat, and that the Sydney Mae II could make it across. At 1953 hours the Umpqua River tower was secured, shortly after that, the Rivers End hailed the station Umpqua River asking if the tower watch stander had left the tower because he had seen the tower light go out, I told him that the tower was securing for the evening.

At 2000 hours, the captain of the charter vessel Fish On Charters drove onto station and spoke briefly with BM3 Davis, at which time Chief Halstead was contacted and came to the front passageway. The captain of the Fish On Charters and Chief Halstead stepped outside to talk, I could not hear what they were talking about. The captain of the Sydney Mae II called station Umpqua River on his cell phone, I informed him of the bar report as well as the restrictions. I stated to him that the bar conditions had

not subsided and that he needed to go to Coos Bay. He was very unhappy about this, stating that it would be more dangerous for him to take his passengers to Coos Bay. I told

him that the Bar was still restricted to all recreational vessels and uninspected vessels, he said "fine I'll take my passengers to Coos Bay but it would be even more dangerous". That was when the phone cut out, he was angry and I thought he had hung up on me.

At 2042, the Captain of Sully's Guide Service hailed station Umpqua River on channel 16 VHF-FM, stating that he and other Charter Vessel Operators were watching the Sydney Mae II and said that the vessels lights disappeared suddenly, there was a loud crashing sound and they observed a blue strobe light drifting south of the south jetty. I immediately contacted Chief Halstead, at which time they prepared to get the Motor lifeboat 47229 underway.

I contacted Sector North Bend, informing them of the situation and that Chief Halstead requested a helo be launched to assist. The appropriate personnel were notified of the situation. The events that followed were thoroughly documented in the communications radio log.

This statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Thomas A. Rehfeldt , Seaman, USCG
September 19, 2005